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BOOSTER SEAT LAW EFFECTIVE AUGUST 1, 2003

Lieutenant Governor Urges Parents and Caregivers to Learn About New Law and How it Protects Child Passengers

(DENVER) -- Colorado's new booster seat law means changes for parents and caregivers transporting children, announced Lt. Governor Jane Norton. The new law is effective on Friday, August 1.

"This law is a tremendous step forward in protecting young children involved in traffic crashes," said Norton. "Booster seats provide an essential transition for children too big for child safety seats they have outgrown and too small for seat belts."

Using a booster seat correctly positions the vehicle's lap/shoulder belt on the child; correctly positioning the lap belt across the child's upper thighs and the shoulder belt across the chest. A child incorrectly positioned with only the vehicle's seat belt is at risk if involved in a crash for serious abdominal, spinal and other injuries.

"All parents and caregivers need to take two seconds to properly restrain their children in appropriate child safety seats," said Colonel Mark Trostel, Chief of the Colorado State Patrol (CSP). "Inspections conducted across the state show that more than 90 percent of Colorado's children are riding at risk in improperly installed child safety seats."

The booster seat law is a new provision added to Colorado's child passenger safety law. It requires children who weigh over 40 pounds or are at least four years old to be properly restrained in a child booster seat or with a child safety belt-positioning device. Children must ride in booster seats until they are six years old or 55 inches tall.

During the first year of the law, the focus will be on educating parents and caregivers about the law and proper use of child safety seats and seat belts for children. Only

warnings will be issued by law enforcement agencies for violations of the booster seat law during this period. On August 1, 2004 officers will issue both citations and warnings. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that child passengers are properly buckled up in the appropriate restraint on every trip.

"Our goal is to improve safety for children by making it easy to get information about the law and help for using child safety seats and seat belts," said Tom Norton, Colorado Department of Transportation's (CDOT) Executive Director.

CDOT and the CSP have resources available to help. A new website at www.carseatscolorado.com has information about the law as well as tips and information about using car seats and seat belts properly for all stages of a child's growth. In addition, parents can call the CSP at 303-239-4625 or 1-877-LUV-TOTS (1-877-588-8687). Brochures about the law are also available from both CDOT and CSP.

The CSP received a \$337,000 grant from CDOT to provide information about Colorado's booster seat law, train car seat technicians and instructors and coordinate child passenger safety activities statewide. The grant is paid for with Federal funds provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

"There is tremendous consumer misunderstanding of crash dynamics," Colonel Trostel pointed out. "Many parents and caregivers frequently do not understand how child safety seats and seat belt systems are designed to work in emergency situations. Misuse of child safety seats is so common, you can assume that it can be found to some degree in any vehicle that has a child inside.

"As administer of the grant, the CSP has created a program titled, 'CPS TEAM COLORADO'," said Colonel Trostel. "CPS (Child Passenger Safety) TEAM COLORADO provides the umbrella for coordinating the child safety seat activities for all safety seat technicians from the CSP, other law enforcement agencies, fire safety and numerous community safety organizations across Colorado."

Currently, CPS TEAM COLORADO is working with nearly 800 technicians to provide training and support services to provide safety seat inspections throughout the state.

Colorado's child passenger safety law includes both secondary and primary enforcement. The booster seat portion of the law is secondary enforcement, meaning a driver must be stopped for another driving offense before they can be ticketed for a violation of the booster seat provision. The infant seat, child safety seat and seat belt provisions of the law are primary enforcement, meaning the driver can be stopped and ticketed if an officer sees an unrestrained or improperly restrained child in the vehicle.

In addition to clearly defining booster seat use, the child passenger safety law also details child safety seats and seat belt use from birth through age 15 as follows:

- The law requires infants to ride in a rear-facing child safety seat until they are at least one year old and weigh at least 20 pounds.
- The law requires children ages one to four years old that weigh from 20 pounds up to 40 pounds to be restrained in a forward-facing child safety seat.
- A child who is at least six years old or at least 55" tall must be properly restrained with a safety belt.

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For more information on child safety seats:

www.carseatscolorado.com

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